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ABSTRACT

A study was conducted to examine the ethical and moral values of public relations personnel. Subjects were 105 American public relations practitioners, 104 Canadian practitioners, and 215 public relations students. Subjects completed an instrument based on P. Crissman's scale of moral value judgments, which contained 50 items scored on a five-point scale with responses ranging from "always right" to "always wrong." The results indicated six factors that clearly have significant impact upon moral values of public relations persons in the United States and Canada: socioeconomic morality, religious morality, basic morality, puritanical morality, basic social responsibility morality, and financial morality. (HTH)

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MEASURING MORAL VALUES

IN PUBLIC RELATIONS

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Opinions vary widely regarding the ethical and moral values of public relations people. While journalists and a large portion of the general public often believe these people have minimal ethics and morals, and would do anything to manipulate mass audiences, those working in public relations generally view their role as a responsible one with a positive effect upon society.¹

There are many reasons for this disagreement. Public relations today is complex and sometimes tainted with compromise. The field covers an extremely wide range of concerns forcing practitioners to act constantly, and in all sorts of situations. There is clouded judgment on questions of what's right or wrong; good or bad; ethical or unethical. And, when we speak of ethics in public relations, we usually speak of a lack of ethics.

The major premise behind the research project reported in this paper is the thesis that public relations will never be any more ethical than the level of basic morality of the people who are in public relations. This is to agree with Lewis and Reinscht, who claim the occupational/professional ethics of a person can not be separated from that individual's personal ethics.² If we view the most simple model of communication with its three parts—sender, message and receiver—much of the thrust and study of public relations concentrates on the messages and the receivers. While a number of recent studies in communication ethics have concentrated on the sender, few, if any, have attempted to examine the basic ethical and moral values of these senders.³ This paper attempts to do that.

It recommends research be conducted in public relations similar to recent studies in marketing and management which reported that people most likely to act ethically were the ones with well-defined codes of personal moral values.⁴

ARE ETHICS AND MORALS THE SAME THING?

We contend that learning more about the moral value judgments of individuals in public relations would provide useful insights about how public relations people make ethical decisions and how they ascribe values to their occupational activities. There is significant evidence suggesting it's possible to define the level of a person's moral judgment without considering particular actions judged.⁵ In fact, one major sign of ethical and moral maturity, in Kohlberg's opinion, is the ability to make ethical judgments and formulate moral principles on our own rather than our ability to conform to moral judgments of people around us.⁶

In our previous papers and articles there has been considerable discussion concerning the philosophical position that peoples' ethics are based on their moral values.⁷ Bourke says the words "ethics" and "morals" are derived from the same Greek source.⁸ Kant claims both are necessary to preserve our "ultimate destiny."⁹ Ethical theory literature clearly supports a connection between moral values and ethical conduct.¹⁰ Socrates, Plato and Aristotle all stress the importance of individual moral convictions in the study of ethics.¹¹

ETHICS AND PUBLIC RELATIONS

These social expressions of what is right and moral appear crucial to public relations practice and to the commonly held thesis of leading

scholars in the field who advocate the importance of a sense of moral and ethical conduct.¹² Many who practice public relations share these views.¹³ Professional public relations societies and associations throughout the world have "codes of ethics" which call upon members to be honest, moral, to work in accord with the public interest, and so forth.

Given the essentially voluntary character of ethical behavior in public relations, the scope of potential quantitative research concerning public relations ethics is both complex and fascinating. Indeed, one of such area concerns the differences between public relations ethics and journalism ethics. Although journalists might be considered to be more ethical than public relations people by the general public, several important developments in this debate have emerged recently. These include an apparent concern for accreditation, and perhaps even licensing, in public relations,¹⁴ along with recent research reports conducted by Izard, for the Society of Professional Journalists/Sigma Delta Chi, which actually indicate that a majority of journalists believe some forms of deception are permissible "if the situation demands it and circumstances are right."¹⁵

Although it will be difficult to convince journalism people—both practitioners and educators—that public relations can be practiced ethically a number of recent studies have confirmed that ethical behavior is good for business and that profit isn't the only motive for success in America today.¹⁶ A number of other studies have discussed the importance of individual values and ethics in various aspects of communication work.¹⁷

SITUATIONAL ETHICS vs. ABSOLUTE ETHICS

Although we can't ignore the conclusive evidence which clearly indicates that human values change over time, we must recognize that the traditional philosophers—Bourke, Kant, Bonhoeffer, Hobbes, et. al.—have argued that ethical and moral philosophy is a normative science.¹⁸ As such it provides an opportunity for the absolute difference between right and wrong in human conduct. Like the journalists we mentioned earlier who appear to believe deception is permitted at times, many who practice public relations subscribe to the concept of situational ethics where they often discover ways to justify unethical behavior. According to Ewing, Hitler attempted to use situational ethics to excuse great atrocities by claiming they were for "the greatest good."¹⁹

CAN MORAL VALUES BE MEASURED?

Fortunately a number of scales exist for the quantitative measurement of moral values. These have been used in social science research for decades. Recently some attempts have been made to use aspects of these in mass communication research.²⁰ Furthermore, a small number of research scholars in journalism and mass communication recently have reported research results which have adapted these scales and others for communicator analysis measurement. There also have been a number of recent qualitative studies on ethical values in communication.²¹

At this point it appears the scales with the greatest validity are those designed to measure individual moral and ethical values. The Allport-Vernon scale was used by Whitely to study ethical values of university students.²² Another good example is Bender's study which measured religious values.²³

Crissman designed a 50-item inventory to examine changes in moral value judgments of university students at ten-year intervals from 1929 through 1949.²⁴ Rettig and Pasamanick made extensive use of this Crissman scale throughout the 1950s.²⁵

METHODOLOGY

The measuring instrument was based primarily on Crissman's scale, although certain modifications were necessary and eight items were changed or altered slightly. There were fifty Likert-type items, each scored on a five-point scale with responses ranging from "always right" to "always wrong." The complete items, instructions and anchors are available from the author. The items were listed in a systematic random fashion. Since the sample included Canadians it was necessary to modify slightly those questionnaires mailed to Canada. For example, while the Americans were questioned about the morality of "forging a check," the Canadians dealt with "forging a cheque." The author's previous experience with Canadian subjects in mass communication research indicates response rates are considerably higher when this research thoughtfulness is practiced. Some American communication researchers actually have sent to Canada mail questionnaires with return envelopes stamped with U.S. postage. Care was taken not to make such insensitive mistakes with the Canadian population of this international study.

Three groups of subjects were included in the total sample. There were American public relations practitioners selected at random from the Atlanta membership roster of the International Association of Business Communicators (IABC), Canadian practitioners selected in a similar way

from IABC membership rosters from the Calgary and Edmonton chapters, and a student sample selected from public relations classes at a major South-eastern U.S. journalism school whose public relations sequence is accredited by the Accrediting Council for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication (ACEJMC).

Usable responses were collected from a total of 424 subjects. Of these 105 were American practitioners 104 were Canadian practitioners and 215 were public relations students. Mail questionnaires were sent to both of the practitioner groups. The students completed questionnaires during regular class periods.

IABC membership rosters were employed because the organization is the only public relations professional society with a good distribution of membership in both countries. The combined characteristics and populations of Calgary and Edmonton—such as Calgary being the major business boom town of that part of Canada expanding so rapidly and Edmonton being a thriving provincial capital—make the two cities rather similar to Atlanta, the state capital city which has grown and developed considerably throughout the past decade as part of the American expansion in the "Sunbelt." The student population served two major purposes. First, that of a control group, and, later, when it was determined that factor analysis would be the most appropriate mathematical procedure to use in this study the student sample was necessary to provide the total sample with an appropriately sized matrix for procedures involving 50 statements. One must also realize that many of these "students" actually will be working in public relations by the time this research project is completed and published.

Principle component factor analysis was performed on responses to

the measuring instrument. The cut-off for rotation was an eigenvalue of 1.0. Only those factors containing at least two items with $\pm .50$ or stronger primary loadings and no secondary loadings stronger than $\pm .30$ were considered for primary discussion. However, given the exploratory nature of this study and the lack of any research like it in the public relations literature, these criteria were considered as guidelines. Consequently, two sets of results are discussed; first, only the factors clearly meeting the above guidelines; and, second, some factors closely approximating these guidelines.

RESULTS

The principal components procedures produced fourteen factors with eigenvalues greater than 1.0. This fourteen-factor solution, shown in Table 1, accounted for 62.9 percent of the total variance.

TABLE 1

EIGENVALUES AND PERCENT OF VARIANCE EXPLAINED FROM INITIAL FACTOR SOLUTION*

Factor Extracted	Eigenvalue	Percent of Variance	Cumulative Percent of Variance
1	10.216	20.4	20.4
2	4.029	8.1	28.5
3	2.523	5.0	33.5
4	2.007	4.0	37.7
5	1.745	3.5	41.0
6	1.540	3.1	44.1
7	1.370	2.7	46.9
8	1.302	2.6	49.5
9	1.208	2.4	51.9
10	1.161	2.3	54.2
11	1.146	2.3	56.5
12	1.133	2.3	58.8
13	1.105	2.1	60.9
14	1.008	2.0	62.9

*These were the only factors retained for the Varimax rotations.

A Varimax rotated factor matrix was performed on this solution. This matrix contained six factors which met the study's primary loading guidelines. Three additional factors closely approximated these criteria. The complete Varimax solution for all rotated factors and the coefficient alphas for the interpreted factors can be found in Table 2. The preliminary interpretation of these nine factors follows.

Factor I. Ten items appear to define Factor I as shown by the underlined loadings in Table 2. A close look reveals that each one loads positively on the factor and all statements appear to represent a socio-economic morality. Such statements as "setting on fire a vacant building you own to collect insurance," committing "armed robbery," "a student who is allowed to grade his or her own paper reporting a higher grade than the one earned," "falsifying a federal income tax return," "speeding away after one's car knocks down a pedestrian," "depositing more than one ballot in an election in order to aid a favorite," "bribing a police officer to avoid a ticket," "advertising a medicine to cure a disease known to be incurable by such a remedy," "misrepresenting the value of an investment in order to induce credulous persons to invest," and "accepting money for your vote in an election," seem to reflect a concern for societal and financial aspects. In addition to those ten items clearly meeting the study's loading criteria there were two other items which have moderately high primary loadings and no secondary loadings above .27. These items are "keeping over-change given you by a clerk in mistake," and "copying from another's paper in a school examination." Both clearly fall within the social and economic areas. The highest loadings occur on items concerning accepting

TABLE 3

State- ment	Abbreviated Issue Title [§]	VARIMAX ROTATION OF PRINCIPLE COMPONENTS FACTOR MATRIX													
		I	II	III	IV	V	VI	VII	VIII	IX	X	XI	XII	XIII	XIV
1. Killing in self defense		.01	.00	.04	.02	.12	.01	-.04	-.09	.06	.04	.04	.47	.00	.04
2. Kidnapping a child		-.02	-.01	-.05	<u>.52</u>	-.02	.01	-.06	-.04	.14	.11	-.10	.01	-.01	.03
3. Having premarital sex		-.02	.57	.12	.03	.35	.24	-.03	-.07	-.01	.05	.11	.12	-.09	.14
4. Forging a check		.06	-.16	.03	.40	.06	.93	-.07	.04	.05	.14	.02	-.02	.08	.01
5. Betting on football games		.05	.19	.24	.03	.18	.21	.09	.03	-.07	.08	.10	.01	.08	.03
6. Smoking cigarettes		.11	.14	.09	.18	-.07	.29	.03	.11	-.12	.08	-.11	-.04	.07	.05
7. Failing to keep promises		.11	.15	.12	.31	-.11	.09	.14	.03	-.18	-.08	-.03	.08	.10	-.15
8. Having unsafe work conditions		.18	.00	.03	<u>.62</u>	-.06	.02	.15	-.01	-.14	-.13	-.04	.06	.03	.15
9. Letting deformed baby die		.01	.24	.05	.11	-.03	-.01	.06	.04	-.09	.02	.38	.37	-.04	-.04
10. A legislator taking a bribe		.29	-.02	.02	<u>.52</u>	.17	.06	.17	.12	-.16	-.23	-.01	-.03	-.09	-.14
11. Lying under oath in court		.29	.12	-.02	<u>.58</u>	-.02	.04	.10	-.04	-.07	-.09	.17	-.05	-.20	-.18
12. Int'nl power dealing unjust		.31	-.01	.08	.33	.16	.07	.07	.10	.01	-.24	.09	.02	.25	.17
13. OK to kill daughter's rapist		.08	.13	.03	-.08	.10	.02	.10	-.02	.03	-.01	.50	.12	.05	.03
14. Living beyond your means		.28	.06	.04	.10	.09	.25	.21	.20	.08	-.04	-.04	.11	.07	-.09
15. Smoking marijuana		.14	.46	.11	.02	.27	.51	.03	.03	.10	.12	-.03	-.14	-.04	-.01
16. Committing adultery		.04	<u>.61</u>	.00	.05	-.09	.14	.00	-.01	.08	-.05	.06	.09	-.03	.06
17. Drunk driving		.36	.01	.09	.04	.03	.53	.08	.06	.14	-.07	.09	.06	.03	.02
18. Paying less than living wage		.38	.03	.07	.10	-.15	.17	.14	.23	-.02	-.14	.04	.04	.01	.38
19. Armed robbery		<u>.56</u>	.05	-.02	.26	-.04	.13	.12	.05	.06	.00	.19	-.08	-.19	.02
20. Not giving money to charity		.24	.11	.15	.05	.03	.00	<u>.62</u>	.10	.06	-.04	.09	-.07	.01	.14
21. Not voting in elections		.23	.02	.02	.04	.12	.17	<u>.60</u>	.15	.00	.12	.05	.01	.04	-.10
22. Crowding out weak competitor		.15	.02	.13	-.02	.16	.03	.16	<u>.51</u>	-.01	-.05	-.05	-.02	.01	-.09
23. Lying to get a reduced fare		.38	.13	.48	.01	.16	.20	.05	.15	-.01	-.04	.10	-.15	.23	-.11
24. Cheating on grading own exam		<u>.62</u>	.17	.29	.08	.00	.11	.05	.08	.01	-.13	-.01	-.06	.06	-.06
25. Not giving money to religion		.10	.49	.07	.06	.08	-.07	.36	.09	.40	.02	.12	-.08	.02	.11
26. Keeping over-change		.40	.08	.27	.02	.11	.07	.09	.08	.04	.06	.02	.12	.01	.04
27. Copying from another's exam		.38	.09	.24	.18	.09	.13	.07	.02	.03	.12	.03	.11	.03	.05

TABLE 2 - Continued

St'ment	Abbreviated Issue Title	I	II	III	IV	V	VI	VII	VIII	IX	X	XI	XII	XIII	XIV
28. Run away after hitting p'drstn.	<u>.64</u>	.09	.03	.01	-.10	.05	.08	.03	-.07	-.02	.14	.03	-.09	.09	
29. Charging too much interest	.25	.10	.03	.05	-.01	.08	.06	<u>.64</u>	-.02	.03	.05	-.09	.02	.18	
30. Cheating on income tax	<u>.60</u>	.11	.17	.16	.01	.05	-.04	.13	.11	.04	.27	-.01	.22	-.02	
31. To gossip	.30	.31	.16	.14	.05	.21	.11	.23	-.05	.17	.05	-.02	.23	-.03	
32. Having homosexual relationship	.06	<u>.78</u>	-.04	-.02	-.16	-.07	.08	.03	-.01	.11	-.10	-.10	-.01	-.16	
33. Getting divorced	-.03	<u>.56</u>	.09	-.05	.09	.02	-.11	.05	-.07	.08	.13	.02	-.11	-.07	
34. Stuffing ballot boxes	<u>.67</u>	.05	.18	.03	-.05	.14	-.03	.13	.04	.04	.04	-.01	-.03	-.06	
35. Committing suicide	.15	<u>.52</u>	-.05	.02	.11	-.07	.06	.08	.03	.13	.10	.08	.14	.03	
36. Profane or blasphemous speech	<u>.74</u>	<u>.51</u>	.15	.09	.02	.16	.07	.09	.07	.13	.12	.00	.29	-.02	
37. Bribing a police officer	<u>.50</u>	.01	.22	.09	.26	.12	.11	.08	-.04	-.05	.00	.04	.27	-.16	
38. Not fighting in unjust war	-.05	.26	.09	.03	.07	.03	.06	-.01	.07	.62	.02	-.02	.01	-.01	
39. False/misleading advertising	<u>.66</u>	.03	-.01	.02	-.01	-.02	.17	-.03	-.14	.07	-.18	.08	-.06	.19	
40. Lying to attract investors	<u>.71</u>	.02	.09	.15	.09	.02	.07	.11	-.02	-.03	-.13	.21	.04	.17	
41. Taking bribe for your vote	<u>.72</u>	-.02	.11	.07	.12	.10	.12	.13	.10	.02	-.03	.04	.10	-.09	
42. Not attending church weekly	.04	.31	.02	-.02	.03	.10	.05	-.02	.60	.09	-.01	.06	.02	.11	
43. Making huge profits	.03	-.09	.06	.07	<u>.60</u>	-.01	.01	.17	-.03	.01	.04	.07	.03	.08	
44. Using birth control methods	-.04	.03	.14	-.07	<u>.51</u>	.08	-.11	-.06	.10	.05	.06	.20	.03	-.18	
45. Disbelieving in God	.12	<u>.64</u>	.07	.03	.10	-.05	.06	-.03	.28	-.04	.01	-.07	.01	.07	
46. Reading pornography	.18	<u>.53</u>	.09	-.01	.29	.24	.10	.06	.02	-.08	-.03	.02	.16	-.03	
47. Setting fire to get insurance	<u>.72</u>	.19	.11	.12	-.05	.07	.04	.07	.05	-.03	.11	-.01	.08	-.01	
48. News media sensationalizing	.48	.11	.08	.07	.03	-.02	.12	.04	.01	-.02	-.05	-.15	.12	-.01	
49. Killing an enemy soldier	.03	.00	.04	-.08	.11	-.03	-.01	.05	-.05	.29	.16	.42	-.01	.19	
50. To exceed the speed limit	.38	.10	.18	.08	.19	.30	.10	-.06	.06	-.01	.20	-.09	.36	.04	

^Δ Statement numbers correspond to numbers on the instrument presented in Table 1.

* Underlined loadings are ones used to interpret factor.

[§] Caution should be used by readers interpreting the abbreviated titles. For complete wording of issues presented to subjects, please see Table 1.

money for your vote, setting fire to collect insurance and lying to attract investors.

Factor II. There are seven items which clearly meet the loading criteria on this factor and all indicate a positive attitude toward a sense of religious morality. These items are "disbelieving in God," "reading pornographic materials," committing adultery, (note no quotes here) "using profane or blasphemous speech," "committing suicide," "getting divorced," and "having a homosexual relationship." In addition, a number of other items pertaining to religious moral values come extremely close to meeting the criteria and are worth mentioning. The item which asked about "not giving financial support to religion when able," had a .49 loading on the factor but a secondary loading of .36 on another factor. The question about "having sex relations while unmarried," had a primary loading of .57 here but registered a secondary loading of .35 elsewhere. Additional but "non significant" loadings appear on items concerning smoking marijuana, not attending church regularly and gossiping, all of which deal with potentially religious issues.

Factor IV. Four statements clearly define this factor and three other items have their highest loadings here. All these statements appear to concern basic morality in areas such as honesty, law, treatment of others, and so forth. The four major items are "kidnapping and holding a child for ransom," "an industry maintaining working conditions known to be detrimental to its workers' health," "testifying falsely in court when under oath," and "a legislator, for a financial consideration, using influence to secure passage of a law known to be contrary to public interest." The other items are "forging a check," which had a loading of .40; "failing

to keep promises," which loaded at .31; and, "a powerful nation dealing unjustly with a weaker nation over which it has power," at .33. The near-zero loadings on many items suggest that almost half the study's statements are different from basic morality and are better classified along economic, social, religious, and other factors.

Factor V. The two statements clearly defining this factor are "making huge profits," and "using birth control methods." A close look at the loadings here show positive scores on judgments pertaining to items which could provide individual satisfaction and negative loadings on items that could cause individual inconvenience. Also, if the selection criteria are relaxed for this factor, then issues such as pre-marital sex, smoking marijuana and reading pornography all could be connected to the factor. Given that knowledge, perhaps the factor refers to a sense of puritanical morality listing activities that the fundamentalists and the conservatives would experience the greatest difficulty with.

Factor VII. Two questions clearly meet the loading criteria for this factor. They are "not giving money to charity when able," and "not taking the trouble to vote at primaries and elections." This appears to be a very clean and significant factor. Aside from the two statements clearly meeting the loading criteria, most of the questionnaire items register less than moderate loadings. The only exceptions include the positive loadings of .21 on the item concerning living beyond one's means, and the .36 score on the statement about "not providing financial support to religion when able." It appears that this factor is one of a belief in basic social responsibility.

Factor VIII. This factor is defined by two items, both load positively and seem to reflect a sense of financial morality. The statements are "a strong commercial concern selling below cost to crowd out a weaker competitor," and "charging interest above a fair rate when lending money." This sense of financial morality also is echoed with the positive scores of .23 on the item condemning "a prosperous company paying workers less than a living wage," and .20 on the statement about living beyond one's means. It is more difficult to interpret the loading of .23 on the "to gossip" item in connection with these other loadings.

Nonsignificant Factors. As mentioned earlier fourteen factors were rotated. The six factors clearly meeting the loading criteria have been discussed. However, of the remaining eight factors, three closely approximated the loading criteria. Given the lack of conceptual work on public relations ethics research and the exploratory nature of this study, it was felt that a brief look at these three factors might prove interesting.

Factor VI. Although no items meet the loading criteria, this factor does contain two items which load .5 or above and a third statement has its highest loading on this factor. A close look at these items indicates the factor represents a certain belief that the use of substances such as alcohol, tobacco and marijuana is improper. As the loadings reported in Table 2 indicate, even with the high secondary loadings, there was much greater difficulty with "smoking marijuana" and with "driving while intoxicated" than with cigarette smoking. It appears cigarette smoking, while not approved, isn't as improper an activity as the other two items contained in this factor.

Factor XI. This factor is not very clean. Only one item "a jury freeing a father who killed the man who raped his young daughter," loads at .50, and although there is no secondary loading above .13, the only other statement which comes close to meeting the criteria is "a doctor allowing a badly deformed baby die when he or she could save its life but not cure its deformity," which loads at .38. Still it is interesting that both these items concern a sense of social and legal morality. Although our society does not support killing, we have such a dislike for rape that we might permit somebody killing a rapist. Also, while we would wish medical doctors to cure healthy people we might tolerate euthanasia if the only alternative is years of suffering.

Factor XII. Two statements which load between .42 and .47 define this factor. One is "killing a person in self defense," and the other is "killing an enemy soldier." These items seem to reflect another perspective of instances when killing might be tolerable.

These last two factors appear to mirror an opinion which might be expressed as: "I'm opposed to killing, however, I recognize there might be times when it can be tolerated such as in self defense, during times of war, euthanasia, and so forth." One must wonder though if this really were the case why all four statements didn't unite into one factor which clearly met this study's loading criteria.

Severity of Judgment Differences. We also were interested in the severity of any differences in moral value judgment based on sex and nationality. Consequently t-tests were performed with these variables and the study's six major factors. Table 3 presents the results of these tests. All subjects were included in the t-tests based on sex, but only

practitioners were used in testing for differences between Canadians and Americans. As the table indicates, women had more severe mean scores than men on four of the six factors, and Americans had more severe scores than Canadians on four of the six factors. In terms of both severity of mean score differences and statistical significance, there are several interesting contrasts as the table indicates. However, when attempts were made to explore these differences with Duncan procedures, analysis of variance, multiple range tests, and so forth, the interaction effects appeared comparatively insignificant.

TABLE 3

MEAN SEVERITY OF JUDGMENT AND T-TESTS ON FACTORS BY SEX AND NATIONALITY

Factor	Sex	Mean	Sig.	Nation	Mean	Sig.
Factor I (Socio-economic morality) Items 19, 24, 28, 30, 34, 37, 39, 40, 41, 47.	Male	4.53	nsd	Canada	4.58	.01
	Female	4.48		U.S.A.	4.64	
Factor II (Religious morality) Items 16, 32, 33, 35, 36, 45, 46.	Male	3.46	.05	Canada	3.30	nsd
	Female	3.55		U.S.A.	3.37	
Factor IV (Basic Morality) Items 2, 8, 10, 11.	Male	4.59	.01	Canada	4.67	.01
	Female	4.70		U.S.A.	4.72	
Factor V (Puritanical morality) Items 43, 44.	Male	2.43	nsd	Canada	2.65	.05
	Female	2.33		U.S.A.	2.40	
Factor VII (Social Responsibility morality) Items 20, 21.	Male	3.72	nsd	Canada	3.79	nsd
	Female	3.77		U.S.A.	3.82	
Factor VIII (Financial morality) Items 22, 29.	Male	3.76	nsd	Canada	3.77	nsd
	Female	3.77		U.S.A.	3.76	

Note the N=424 on the measures concerning sex as all subjects are included; there were 138 men and 286 women. The N=209 on the nationality measures with 105 Americans and 104 Canadians.

Although student responses were eliminated from the nationality measures and tests shown in Table 3, a comparative look at the student mean scores reveals they are relatively similar on three of these six factors but considerably different on three others. For example, the student mean is .34 higher than the combined practitioner mean on Factor II (religious morality), .18 lower than practitioners on Factor I (socio-economic morality), and .32 lower than practitioners on Factor V (puritanical morality).

DISCUSSION AND SUMMARY

Before discussing the findings in terms of specific factors let's mention some of the differences in overall factorial structures of moral value judgments between our data and previous factor analysis research using the Crissman scale. Although our sample and previously studied ones are not entirely comparable, because of differences in both samples and the various methods used to examine them, the following observations seem to be in order.

First, even though only slight differences on a few statements existed in the questionnaires, our study produced more factors and cleaner factors than previous studies using this scale. Also, there are noteworthy differences between the first and second factors of this study and those factors in previous research. Remembering methodological limitations and considering such differences as only relative, let's analyze the principal factors.

Factor I. (Socio-Economic Morality). The apparent concern for social and economic well being discovered within the ten moral value judgments which formed a constellation of their own in Factor I was more marked among men than women and among Americans than Canadians. Differences,

however, were minimal, and aggregate mean scores were extremely high suggesting a strong concern for the degree of "wrongness" of actions included in statements which registered on the factor. A closer look at these items leads us to several observations, the most striking of which deal with items that registered on this factor in the Rettig and Pasamanick studies but didn't meet the current loading criteria. These data need to be discussed in two ways. First, in terms of our criteria, ten of the fifty items loaded on this factor. If our criteria were used in the previous Crissman scale studies, one finds that twenty of the items load on this factor in one report and twenty-six in another. However, previous research used more permissible criteria which included any loading above $\pm .20$ regardless of secondary loadings. Consequently, Rettig and Pasamanick reported as many as forty-six items loading on the first factor in one study. Given these more permissible criteria and our data one finds that only twenty-six of our items would be selected. Nine of the ten items which loaded significantly on Factor I in our research also were on the previous questionnaires and loaded on the first factor there.

In light of this, we reported the factor to represent socio-economic morality. The words "basic morality" were used in previous studies. If we generalize our results as worthy of representing moral values of the 1980s and view the previous research as representative of the four decades between 1920 and 1960, some evidence of a socio-moral evolution appears to exist. This would be to agree with a number of others who say that our moral values are changing. Kohlberg in particular says our culture is progressing to a moral stage where universal human rights are, in some

cases more important than laws. From a structural point of view, some might suggest evidence of liberalism, social reform and social change. However, others might suggest that we've started to compromise our ethics by ignoring absolute ethics in favor of situational ethics.

Factor II. (Religious Morality). Differences between items pertaining to Factor I and Factor II indicate that public relations people distinguish a difference between activities that relate to "wrong" and "sinful" behavior. Evidence of religious morality also suggests that subjects feel ethics and religion are closely related. Rettig and Pasamanick reported differences between basic moral values and religious moral values suggesting the former result from everyday learning experiences and latter from superimposed authority. It appears our results support that contention. For example, one can find ample evidence of religious values on statements which loaded on factors other than Factor II. However, these activities such as lying, stealing, kidnapping, accepting bribes, drunk driving and even killing all cause pain to others. A look at the items which loaded on our religious morality factor—adultery, swearing, divorce, not believing in God, reading pornography, homosexuality and premarital sex—suggests these activities are considerably different than the remaining twenty statements loading clearly on other major factors. That main difference appears to be reflected in the difference between what's "wrong" and what's "sinful." This is to suggest, perhaps, that some "sinful" behaviors—e.g., swearing and reading pornography—are significantly different from some "wrong" behaviors such as killing and robbery. The literature reports studies indicating that moral values are dependent on religious beliefs. However, some argue this might be the

case subjectively but not objectively and stress that empirical studies have found little relation between measures of ethics, morals, honesty, et. al., and religious participation or education.

Our results, nonetheless, plus those of similar moral value studies and Pollock's recent inventory of American values suggest there certainly is a relationship between the secular and the sacred. Clearly, our study finds religious morality to be a strong and viable factor in the ethical value structures of public relations people.

It also appears that as our Western society has become more reformed and liberal, issues which registered as factors of basic morality thirty years ago are better classified in terms of religious morality today. For example, in our study we discovered that swearing, premarital sex and adultery loaded clearly on the religious factor. However, similar research conducted three decades ago found items such as these to load more strongly on factors of basic morality than on factors of religious morality. In short, as a society becomes more permissive and liberal there appears to be greater changes in basic overall morality than in specific religious morality. This appears true even though today's religious views generally are more liberal and permissive than they were three decades ago. Examination of aggregate mean scores, as seen in Table 3, clearly shows these religious values are far less severe than most of the study's factors.

While women had higher mean scores than men, and Americans had higher mean scores than Canadians on this factor, it's interesting the mean differences were not great, especially among the Canadian and American practitioners. While the American practitioners in the sample

came from Georgia, where conservative and fundamentalists religion is predominant, the Canadian sample came from Alberta where religion is not as much a part of every day life and where pornography is much easier to obtain. This confirms our suspicion that religious morality values are not restricted to the religious people who attend church on a regular basis.

Factor IV. (Basic Morality). The findings on Factor IV suggest that public relations people distinguish between acts that are conventionally wrong and those that are more intrinsically wrong (Factor I). The severity of mean scores is high on both Factor I and Factor IV which suggests strong concern about activities suggested in the statements but clearly recognizes a distinction between the items which loaded on the different factors. The higher mean scores of women and Americans were of statistical significance.

Factor V. (Puritanical Morality). Results here show the lowest mean scores in terms of judgment severity. Since the factor appears to refer to puritanical morality, it might be suggesting that these issues are not crucial concerns of the majority of this study's subjects. At least they don't appear to be as important as the other five factors. A word of caution is necessary concerning the large and significant difference in mean scores between Canadians and Americans on this factor's items. Note that the mean analysis only included items which loaded clearly on the factor. This resulted in the loading of only two items. Clearly the majority of difference according to nationality was on the item about "making huge profits." This difference appears to result from the Canadian beliefs in socialism in contrast to American views about capitalism.

Factor VII. (Basic Social Responsibility). This factor appears to suggest the need to provide financial support to charity and religion, and, in general, seems to support the idea that we all should be responsible citizens. The factor has only moderate aggregate mean scores and displays minimal differences in terms of both sex and nationality.

Factor VIII. (Financial Morality). Items which could represent financial difficulties to the "little guy" load on this factor. It's existence suggests a difference between statements which loaded on Factor VIII and the economic items on Factor I. Those earlier economic concerns appeared to be involved with a broad and general aspect of the total society while the one's at issue here appear to deal more with the small company, the individual who needs a loan, and so forth. There were nearly identical mean scores between sexes and nationalities.

SUMMARY

This study discovers six factors to clearly have significant impact upon moral values of public relations people in the U.S. and Canada. Based on this study it can be suggested that the structure of moral values in the North American public relations person is based upon the following: socio-economic morality, religious morality, basic morality, puritanical morality, basic social responsibility morality and financial morality.

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